

Fire Up Your Creativity™ with Animal Habitats®

Grade Level: 4-12
Cross-Curricular-Art & Science
Exploring Relief Sculpture in Ceramics
Using Speedball Glazes and Underglazes

Description:

Each student will choose an animal and its habitat to represent in a relief, with its inherent depth and shadow. Each will use under glazes to paint the animal onto a slab of clay and then press and cut out leaves to add to the background slab. After the piece is assembled and bisque fired, colored glazes will be applied to the leaves to highlight the imprinted textures.

Objectives:

- Students will research and represent an animal in its natural environment.
- Students will use an additive (sprigging) method to construct a clay relief.
- Students will use the "score-and-slip" method to join clay pieces.
- Students will use objects from nature to create texture and shapes in clay. These will be used to construct their animal's habitat.
- Students will explore relief and its inherent depth and use of shadow as a format for artistic expression.

Materials:

Sax White Art Clay, 50 Lbs. Moist (449432-705)
Speedball® Underglazes, 12-Color Set, 2-Oz. Jars (408089-705)
Speedball® Earthenware Glazes, Pints (407271-705)
Speedball Brush-Tools
- Master Set, Set of 11 (409199-705)
- Glaze Set, Set of 6 (409200-705)
- Detail Set, Set of 6 (409201-705)
Budget Rolling Pin (371843-705)
Finishing Rubber, Hard (419344-705)
Pro Needle Tool (243699-705)
Rigid Scraper (serrated edge) (241590-705)

You Will Also Need:

Leaves, tree bark or other natural items
Slides or photos of reliefs and of animals in their natural environments.



Directions:

1. View and discuss pictures of animals and of reliefs.
2. Have students choose an animal and its habitat to represent in relief. Then have them collect leaves and other natural items that suggest the animal's natural environment and climate.
3. Have the students roll a slab of moist clay for the background of their relief and cut it to the desired shape and size. To decide on a composition, have the students arrange their leaves on the slab and determine where the animal will be painted. Draw a faint outline of the animal with a pencil or wood tool and lightly press the leaves into the clay where clay leaves will later be attached.
4. Remove and save the natural leaves.
5. Using underglazes, paint the animal onto the slab. Because the slab is still wet, the underglazes will blend easily. Try to use bold strokes and don't over-blend to avoid muddying-up the colors. Most of the underglazing of the animal should be completed now to avoid trying to paint around the clay leaves that will be added later.
5. Take a second slab about 1/4" thick and smooth away any texture with the Finishing Rubber. To transfer the shapes and textures of the natural leaves to the clay, lay them on top of the slab (most-textured side down) and press them firmly into the clay with the Finishing Rubber, or roll with a brayer. Remove natural leaves. Cut clay leaves out following the imprinted leaf edges with the needle tool. Turn them over and score the back using the Rigid Scraper or another tool and apply slip. Also, score and slip where the leaves will be joined to the background. Press the leaves in place on the background shape. Smooth rough edges with Brush-Tool.
6. Allow to dry slowly. When completely dry, bisque fire to cone 04.
7. Using colored glazes, paint the animal's surroundings. This will enhance textured surfaces. If desired, the edges of the leaves can be painted with a glaze or an underglaze. The animal may be covered in clear glaze, or additional color can be added with glazes to increase the depth of the image. Remember that different color glazes may blur into one another where they touch. This may or may not be a desired effect.

National Art Standards:

Content Standard #1: Understanding media, techniques and processes.
Content Standard #2: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.